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Accused hears charges in Surrey Six murders

JEFF HODSON
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A man accused of mass murder in a 2007 gangland shooting in Surrey appeared unconcerned as he was charged yesterday with six counts of first-degree murder.

Cody Rae Haevischer, 24, of Nanaimo is a short man with a thick, muscular build and close-cropped hair. He and three other members of the Red Scorpions gang are charged with the Surrey Six slayings at the Balmoral Tower highrise in October 2007.

Killed in the targeted hit were alleged drug dealers Ryan Bartolomeo, Eddie Narong, and Corey and Michael Lal as well as innocent bystanders Ed Schellenberg and Chris Mohan.

Haevischer, who was wearing a grey hoodie, glanced around the courtroom once as the six first-degree murder charges and the single charge of conspiracy to commit murder were read against him.

The entire appearance was less than two minutes. He was remanded in custody until his next appearance on May 15.

Visitors to the courthouse were met with tight security yesterday and were searched with metal detectors at the entrance.

As well, extra sheriffs sat in Courtroom 107, which has bulletproof glass separating the court from the gallery.

Haevischer's co-accused, James Kyle Bacon, 23, and Matthew James Johnston, 24, are expected to appear at provincial court in Surrey today.

The Crown said it plans to seek a "direct indictment" to take the case directly to B.C. Supreme Court, foregoing a preliminary hearing in B.C. Provincial Court.

On Friday, a third man, Dennis Karbovanec, 27, pleaded guilty to three counts of second-degree murder and will be sentenced in B.C. Supreme Court on Thursday. Speculation is that he will testify against the other accused.

EMILIO ORLANDO/METRO WORLD NEWS

Rescuers in the town of Paganica, Italy carry an injured person out from the ruins of a building collapsed by a massive central Italian earthquake. Paganica is a suburb of L'Aquila, the city hardest-hit by the quake. More coverage, pg 8

Hopes dim for survivors of Italy quake

DISASTER Rescuers used mechanical diggers and their bare hands to search through the night this morning for survivors of Italy's worst quake in three decades which killed nearly 180 people.

More than 24 hours after the quake shook the central Italian region of Abruzzo, emergency workers dug out two students early today from collapsed buildings in L'Aquila, the medieval mountain city of 68,000 people worst hit by the disaster.

Rescuers have pulled some 100 people from the rubble but with others missing, civil protection officials said hopes were dimming of finding many more alive.

Early this morning civil protection officials put the number of dead at 179. There were at least 34 people missing and 1,500 injured. They said the number of homeless was at least 17,000, far less that the some 50,000 estimated yesterday.

The quake, measuring between 5.8 and 6.3 on the Richter scale, struck shortly after 3:30 a.m. yesterday, catching residents in their sleep and flattening houses, ancient churches and other buildings in 26 cities and towns.

Aftershocks rattled the area, some 100 km east of Rome in the rugged Abruzzo region, well into the night as thousands of people sheltered in their cars and in tent camps.

REUTERS

Relief, fear in city's Italian community

EARTHQUAKE Members of Vancouver's Italian community have been hectically phoning family in Italy to ensure they weren't caught in yesterday's earthquake.

Lina Manetta said the relief was immense when her sister, who lives just 13 kilometres from where the earthquake hit, picked up the phone.

"She said she was in the house and was OK," Manetta said. "My husband phoned another town and it was devastated."

Manetta said that calls to other relatives in and around L'Aquila, the worst-hit town, were not picked up.

Ashley Komaryk-De Lucio, director of cultural programs at the Italian Community Centre, said 37 local organizations are meeting tomorrow night.

"It's just a devastating tragedy," Komaryk-De Lucio said. "We have veterans associations, cultural and folk groups and others sitting down to plan the fundraising."

An account has been set up at VanCity to accept donations.

METRO VANCOUVER

Celebrity Buzz pg18

Faris' parents boast online

Your Money pg11

Gift with cash: Smart Cookies

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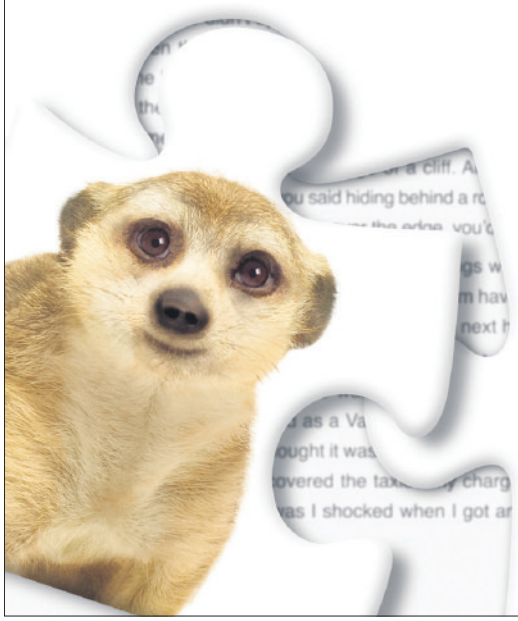

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Researchers discover source of grape smell
The fragrant scent of grapevine flowers has been traced to pollen grains stored in the plant's male parts, UBC researchers have discovered. The researchers said the findings are contrary to common perception that petals alone produce perfume. METRO VANCOUVER

Local

Macaw goes missing

The Greater Vancouver Zoo is asking for help finding a missing macaw. The blue-and-gold bird was taken out of its habitat to get fresh air in the Parrot Gardens yesterday and hasn't been seen since. The bird's wings have been clipped, so it's unlikely it flew away. NEWS1130.COM

Truck in shooting linked to crime

Cops say officer shot driver in vehicle alleged to have dragged sex worker

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The latest man shot by police was driving a stolen pickup truck that had previously dragged a sex-trade worker for nearly a block in the Downtown Eastside, police said yesterday.

Const. Jana McGuinness said that a sex-trade worker alleges that on March 29, a man driving that same truck had taken drugs from her without paying and sped off.

The woman's jacket became caught in the door and she was dragged for about 100 metres before the driver opened the door, causing her to fall to the ground.

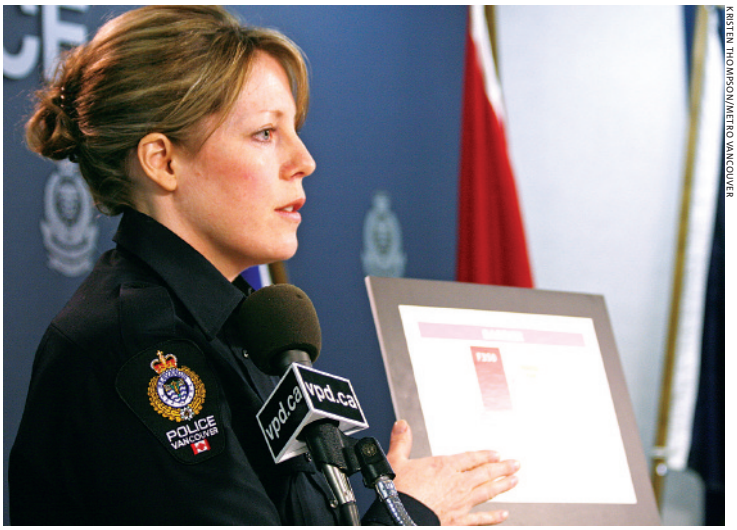
On Sunday evening, officers had been searching for the truck when they spotted it in a parking lot near Jackson and Union streets.

When they moved their cruiser to box it in, the driver accelerated toward them, McGuinness said.

"Tires were smoking, as the driver repeatedly refused commands from the officers," McGuinness said, adding that one of the officers was standing between the truck and another car, and was afraid of being crushed.

He fired a single shot into the truck, hitting the 38-year-old driver who was taken to hospital with non-life-threatening injures.

"The decision to use deadly force is not taken lightly," said McGuinness. "Our officers are trained to shoot to stop a threat."



KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Const. Jana McGuinness, at the Vancouver Police Department yesterday, demonstrates where officers were positioned before one of them shot a man in a stolen SUV.

Electric cars to be tested locally

TECHNOLOGY Vancouver will be the testing ground for the world's first production-ready highway-capable electric car, the city announced yesterday.

By the end of the year, Vancouver will introduce one Mitsubishi i MiEV (Mitsubishi Innovative Electric Vehicle) to its fleet for demonstration and testing.

"Supporting this early adoption of plug-in electric cars is one way that Vancouver is becoming a leader in green technology," said Mayor Gregor Robertson.

B.C. Hydro will also add one of the vehicles to its fleet. Both Hydro and the city have the option of adding more cars if they become available.

The i MiEV is being tested in a number of cities in Japan, New Zealand, Australia, the U.S. and Europe. It will be launched commercially in Japan this summer.

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

metronews.ca
What's online today.

Video An Alberta clinic's intensive program provides new hope for parents of autistic children at **metronews.ca/canada**

Your Money Allan Small looks ahead to sectors that will lead the way out of the recession at **metronews.ca/investing**

Summer camp for blind lacks funding, cuts back

FERNANDO CARNEIRO
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CNIB After 40 summers, camp programs for blind children and teenagers at the Bowen Island Lodge will be suspended this year due to a lack of funding.

Deacon Jones, 16, attended the camps run by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) for nine years.

"As a visually impaired teenager, it's hard for a lot of us to become accepted in the school environment," Jones said. "In these camps you go and everyone is a lot like you there. I've met some of my best friends there."

Jones said he was upset to hear the programs are being suspended.

"Not so much for myself, but for future generations. I was personally planning to apply for a counsellor position this summer."

Deacon Jones

He said the camps offered him an opportunity to spend time in the sun and the chance to experience new activities.

"There were kids from the interior who had never seen the ocean before," Jones said. "I learned goal ball (at camp) and I'm now an athlete with the B.C. Blind Sports Association."

More details on the temporary cancellation are expected today when the CNIB hosts a news conference.

News in brief

SIGHTING Actor Chris Noth, Mr. Big in Sex and the City, is in Vancouver. He was spotted having dinner with a business acquaintance at Gotham Steakhouse and Cocktail Bar downtown Sunday night.

STABBING Two 10th-graders at Burnaby Central Secondary School have been arrested in connection with the stabbing of a classmate yesterday. The victim, a Grade 11 student, was stabbed in the back of the head inside the school.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Bear warning issued

After a 135-kilogram black bear was spotted in the Mosquito Creek area, the North Shore Black Bear Network sent out a warning that the hibernation season is over. Residents are being advised to keep their garbage locked. **NEWS1130.COM**

News in brief

EXPO L.A. Ink star Corey Miller is taking part in the West Coast Tattoo Culture Show at the Tradex in Abbotsford. Miller, owner of the Six Feet Under tattoo parlour, will be tattooing on site at the tradeshow, April 17 to 19. Visit westcoasttattoo.com.

VOLUNTEERING The 2009 World Police and Fire Games put out a call for 1,000 volunteers yesterday for the games that will be held in Burnaby and in communities across the Lower Mainland this summer. More than 35,000 participants are expected to take part in 66 different sporting events. Visit 2009wpfg.ca for more info.

COSMETIC PESTICIDES The Canadian Cancer Society is calling on the B.C. government to ban the sale of cosmetic pesticides, CBC News Online reports. Quebec has a ban in place and Ontario's starts on Earth Day, April 22.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Deadly demonstration

Avalanche centre uses YouTube video to raise awareness

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The video of a snowmobiler narrowly escaping an avalanche in Eastern British Columbia posted on YouTube shows "everything you shouldn't do."

Mary Clayton, with the Canadian Avalanche Centre (CAC), said her organization is using the video to raise awareness after the deadliest avalanche season for snowmobilers on record.

"This slope is exactly the type of slope where avalanches have been occurring," Clayton said yesterday. "Sun-affected slopes, a certain steepness, a thinner snowpack and you can see rocks and trees sticking out."

The video, filmed Saturday at the Monashee Mountains near Valemount, shows a snowmobiler following tracks left by previous riders up a hill. Just as he reaches the top, the slope fractures and both rider and machine are carried down in a very large avalanche.

John Kelly, CAC operations manager, said the unidentified rider "is incredibly fortunate."

"You can see the person somehow ends up riding out at the bottom, so we know we're not watching someone die," he said. "But it very easily could have ended that way."

The video showing a snowmobiler narrowly surviving an avalanche can be seen at metronews.ca

Of the 24 avalanche fatalities this year, 18 have been snowmobilers — double the previous worst season when nine riders were killed in 2002-03. All but one of the fatal accidents this year have been in B.C.

Karl Klassen, public avalanche forecaster with the CAC, said the past winter was unusual.

"We had a fairly cold winter with periods of dry clear spells interspersed with snow storms," Klassen said. "It's during the clear spells that the snowpack weakens and then you get that weaker snow sandwiched between firmer layers of snow."

He added that snowmobiles are getting mightier and more powerful every year and the ability to travel more challenging terrains has improved.

"The avalanche knowledge has not increased at the same speed as the machines have progressed in their ability to tackle this terrain," he said.

Dead baby's mom contacts police

DEATH The mother of a newborn baby boy found dead in a plastic bag in a quiet East Vancouver neighbourhood has contacted police.

Const. Jana McGuinness said yesterday she can't release any details about the mother or how the baby died.

"She is getting the care she needs," McGuinness said. "This is a sensitive investigation. It's ongoing and moving forward."

The results of an autopsy haven't been released, but police say the death is being treated as suspicious.

The baby, who was stuffed in a plastic bag, was found by a resident of the 2500 block of Charles Street Thursday morning."

KRISTEN THOMPSON/ METRO VANCOUVER

Lion's Gate Bridge **Help on the Hotline**

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Six crisis hotline phones, including this one, were activated on the Lion's Gate Bridge yesterday. They let users connect to a crisis centre if they need emotional support or to an emergency line to report an incident on the bridge.

RCMP probes jogger's killing

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INVESTIGATION About 75 police officers are working around the clock to gather evidence and interview witnesses in the murder of Wendy Ladner-Beaudry, who was killed while jogging through Pacific Spirit Park.

RCMP Cpl. Peter Thiessen yesterday appealed for anyone who might have seen Ladner-Beaudry in the park Friday afternoon to call police and help investigators track her movements leading up to the attack.

"This particular investigation is challenging because of the sheer size of the potential crime scene," Thiessen said.

"This park is massive and has many avenues of escape and entry. We don't want to miss that key piece of evidence that might be within this park."

The 53-year-old mother of two and sister of former city councillor Peter Ladner was found dead at a trail near Southwest Marine Drive and 41st Avenue.

An autopsy was conducted yesterday, but police haven't revealed how Ladner-Beaudry died.

"It can not be discounted that this homicide may have been a random act of violence," said Thiessen.

"The public is warned to continue to take steps to ensure their safety when using Lower Mainland nature trails that are secluded."

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

RCMP Cpl. Peter Thiessen speaks to reporters yesterday near the Pacific Spirit Park trail where Wendy Ladner-Beaudry was found murdered.

"This park is massive and has many avenues of escape and entry. We don't want to miss that key piece of evidence that might be within this park."
RCMP Cpl. Peter Thiessen

Police identify Saturday shooting victim

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CRIME Vancouver police have identified the man who was found shot to death in East Vancouver on Saturday night as 24-year-old David Banh from Vancouver.

Banh was found slumped over in the driver's side seat of a white SUV in a parking lot in the 2800 block of Bentall Street around 11:40 p.m.

He was not known to police.

"We do believe this is a targeted shooting and there's still no definitive gang links," Const. Jana McGuinness said. "The investigation is continuing."

This is Vancouver's 11th homicide in 2009.

Anyone with information about the shooting is asked to call Vancouver police at 604-717-2500 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

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PNE looking to fill 50 character roles
The PNE is hosting an open casting call to fill 50 roles like Garfield and Snoopy. Auditions are May 17 and 18 at the Pacific Coliseum. METRO VANCOUVER

Enhanced ID for U.S. entry now available

Residents can apply for driver's licence or card

Shopping in Seattle is about to get easier.

Applications for a new driver's licence that allows British Columbians to cross into the United States are now being accepted by the province.

B.C.'s enhanced driver's licence (EDL) will allow the cardholder to cross at points of entry by land or water with a single piece of identification.

People who don't drive and youth over age 12 are being offered the option of applying for an enhanced identification card (EIC).

"Through our efforts, the U.S. government now recognizes that enhanced driver's licences and enhanced identification cards can serve as an acceptable and secure alternative to passports at U.S. land and water border crossings," said Peter Van Loan, federal minister of public safety.

Yesterday's announcement follows a successful test phase launched in January 2008.

IMAGES COURTESY OF ICBC

B.C.'s enhanced driver's licence and enhanced identification card will facilitate crossings into the United States.

ICBC is now accepting appointment bookings for customers interested in applying for an EDL or EIC, with appointments starting May 1. Both are voluntary and cost $35.

METRO VANCOUVER

Auto show daily attendance up

SHOWCASE Organizers of the Vancouver International Auto Show at B.C. Place said they were pleased with the turnout at this year's show despite a drop in the total attendance of about 34,000 people.

Daily attendance was up over last year and more than 76,000 people took in the event at B.C. Place this weekend.

The auto show, which traditionally ran nine days, introduced a six-day, extended-hour format this year.

"Considering all the changes in our industry, we are happy with the new show format," said Blair Qualey, president of the New Car Dealers Association of B.C., in a release yesterday.

The auto show, which celebrated its 89th anniversary this year, showcased 500 new makes and models as well as auto products and concept vehicles. JEFF HODSON/ METRO VANCOUVER

Next year

- Next year's show is planned for March 30 to April 4 at B.C. Place.

Road rules to protect emergency workers

SAFETY Drivers will now face fines if they fail to slow down and move over when passing parked emergency vehicles, B.C.'s transportation and infrastructure minister said yesterday.

Kevin Falcon said that 21 emergency workers were injured or killed on B.C. roads between 2001 and 2007 — of those, 12 were killed at the roadside.

"Too often these workers face near-misses, injury or even death, directly due to the carelessness of passing drivers," Falcon said.

"Too often these workers face near-misses, injury or even death."
Kevin Falcon, transportation minister

Beginning June 1, drivers must slow to 70 km/h on highways where the speed limit is 80 km/h or higher, and to 40 km/h where the limit is below 80 km/h, when approaching a stopped emergency vehicle flashing its lights. If there is another lane going in the same direction, drivers must move into that lane if it is safe to do so.

Violators will lose three penalty points against their licence and be fined $148 if the amount is paid within 30 days, or $173 thereafter. METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

TRANSIT Capilano University's transit exchange opened yesterday to accommodate an increasing number of bus riders after the school joined the VanCity U-pass program. This new bus loop allows four routes to serve the North Vancouver campus. Greg Lee, Capilano's president and vice-chancellor, said increased transit ridership will help the school achieve its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2010. METRO VANCOUVER

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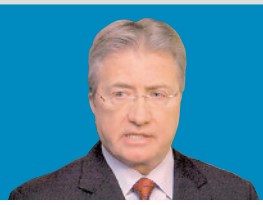
Initiative targets sexual predators

Alberta's Children and Youth Services is asking hotel staff to watch for signs that guests are sexually exploiting children, in a new campaign launched yesterday. After four years of focusing on Internet luring and safety, the provincial department is turning its efforts to "underground" child sexual exploitation. CBC NEWS ONLINE

Canada



Williams blasts health authority

Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams, left, lashed out yesterday at the province's largest health authority, accusing Eastern Health of downplaying revelations it had missed dozens of breast cancer patients in a massive retesting exercise. Eastern Health, meanwhile, yesterday disclosed it had somehow missed 43 patients, up from the 38 patients the authority had revealed late Friday afternoon in a news release. CBC NEWS ONLINE

GTAA admits problems: Baird

AIRPORTS Transport Minister John Baird says the Greater Toronto Airports Authority has owned up to "serious" security shortcomings he discovered at Pearson International Airport.

Baird met yesterday in Ottawa with GTAA president and CEO Lloyd McCoomb and other executives to discuss security concerns he raised after he walked unchallenged onto the airport tarmac during a visit to test security.

"The GTAA has accepted full responsibility," he said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

News in brief

FLOODS Sandbaggers on the weekend have put Winnipeg in good position for approaching floodwaters of the Red River, say officials. CBC NEWS ONLINE

Calgary **Iggy on tour**

TODD KOROL/REUTERS

Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff answers students' questions at a town hall meeting at Western Canada High School in Calgary yesterday. The Liberals have been gaining in popularity according to a recent Leger poll, due to increasing unhappiness over how the Conservatives have been handling the economy.

Doctors give pay for World Health Day

CHARITY About 160 doctors from across Canada are digging deep into their pockets today as part of World Health Day to donate a day's pay to Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief.

The Toronto-based relief agency hopes to raise close to $100,000 in its fourth annual Donate a Day for Africa program, says Roxane Tracey, event spokesperson. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Tories search for soul

Recent tiff leaves conservatives asking questions

Canadian Conservatives may not be in the throes of the kind of public identity crisis facing angst-ridden Republicans in the United States.

Being in power imposes a certain discipline.

But there's a whole lot of soul-searching going on here about where the Canadian conservative movement, particularly under Stephen Harper, is headed.

Complaints about past policy reversals (Senate, Afghanistan, foreign investment, income trusts), and Harper's big-spending, big-bailout, big-government budget form the backdrop.

Along with that, private grumbling in the Conservative caucus about disdainful treatment by Harper's office of former prime minister Brian Mulroney surfaced publicly this weekend.

A contentious brouhaha erupted after party officials told media outlets Mulroney was no longer a member of the Conservative party, an assertion Mulroney — under fire at a public inquiry called by Harper — denied.

Indeed, private misgivings over Harper's leadership style are echoed in a very public discussion now occurring among the broader base of conservatives.

A new website called Homeless Cons has cropped up. The op-ed pages openly debate the Canadian conservative movement.

Preston Manning's think-tank, the Manning Centre for Building Democracy, recently held a conference where the misgivings of many fiscal conservatives, prairie populists, Red Tories, social conservatives, and libertarians were literally centre stage. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Reading

- A new book, Blue Thunder by Ottawa author Bob Plamondon lays out the history of the Conservative movement through the successes and failures of its 19 leaders, and presents Harper's brand of leadership in a critical light.

It only takes a few minutes to shape the next few years.

The B.C. General Election and Referendum on Electoral Reform is Tuesday, May 12th.

If you're registered to vote and your voter information is up to date, voting will only take a few minutes - skip waiting in line to register at the polls. So register today.

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Ontario legislation aims to reduce industry toxins
Modelled after a Massachusetts law that dramatically reduced the use and production of hazardous chemicals in the workplace, legislation to be announced in Ontario today will push industries to limit their toxins and find greener ways of doing business. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Tracking down crime online

Police discovering benefits of social-networking sites

VICTORIA HANDYSIDES
Metro Canada

The assumed anonymity of the Internet may be working against dodgy social networkers, as civic police use new technology-fuelled tools to pad their tracking arsenal.

With more than 1,000 summons and subpoenas waiting to land in the hands of sought-after citizens, Edmonton police are using Facebook to prove few are untraceable.

"People actively evade us, and know we're looking for them," said community peace officer Ryan Kelly. "They'll make every effort to not be home, move, quit their job and become invisible to police."

"People actively evade us, and know we're looking for them."
Peace officer Ryan Kelly, Edmonton police

The Facebook profile EPS Documents was created in October. It bears no description, comments or friends; it is simply stamped by a police crest. Those contacted by the officers behind the glow of their computer screens, may have unknowingly revealed enough to make hiding a futile effort.

"People think the best way to deal with something is pretend it never happened," Kelly said, adding trials can be delayed for years if witnesses and the accused can't be served.

Employing the power of social-networking sites is a relatively new technique for local officers. Police forces around the country are slowly catching on to how online media can be used to their advantage through sites like Twitter, YouTube and Facebook.

Edmonton's document services unit is one of a handful that exist in the country due to an overwhelming number of witnesses and accused criminals that must be tracked.

Kelly said the site makes his job easier.

"People don't just disappear," he said.

Details scarce in Calgary murder-suicide case

CRIME Calgary investigators say a man who stabbed his common-law wife to death and then leapt to his own death last weekend was known to police.

Police also confirmed they had been to the residence previously, but wouldn't confirm why.

"We were aware there were some domestic situations involved with the family."
Staff Sgt. John Guigon, Calgary police

"We were aware there were some domestic situations involved with the family and there was a restraining order in place," acting Staff Sgt. John Guigon of the domestic conflict unit said.

Police remain tight-lipped about the Saturday murder-suicide, but said John Buzo, 30, stabbed Tubi Kawaja, 35, to death before jumping off their sixth-floor apartment balcony. A three-year-old was found unharmed in the apartment. METRO CANADA

Afghanistan **Law to be revised**

JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS

Canada's Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon, second from left, jokes with reporters at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington yesterday. Cannon says the Afghan government has assured him it will rework and strike "contentious clauses" from a proposed law, which critics charge allows men to rape their wives.

School-comparison tool pulled

EDUCATION Ontario will pull its new online school-comparison feature and review the information provided after hearing concerns about the website, including such details as families' socio-economic status and parents' education levels.

The Ministry of Education's "school information finder" allows parents to compare up to three schools at a time and includes the percentage of students from low-income households, those new to Canada or whose first language is not English.

Opposition parties said parents who wish to could use it to avoid schools where families are poorer or with large immigrant populations.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Experts find genetic trigger for deadly skin cancer

Up to 70 per cent of melanoma skin cancers may be triggered by a gene mutation that causes cells to become cancerous after excessive exposure to the sun, researchers said yesterday. The discovery could lead to better treatments for the most deadly form of skin cancer. REUTERS

World

Sowing seeds of support

Indonesia's political parties are using high-yielding rice seeds to woo an agriculture-based electorate in this year's elections. Megawati Sukarnoputri's PDI-P party has launched its own variety of "MSP" rice: That stands for "Mari Sejahterakan Petani" or "let's improve the welfare of farmers," but it's no coincidence those are the initials of the former president. REUTERS

Italian scientist predicted quake

An Italian scientist predicted a major earthquake around L'Aquila weeks before disaster struck the city early yesterday, killing more than 180 people and injuring 1,500, but he was reported to authorities for spreading panic.

The government insisted yesterday that the warning, by seismologist Giacchino Giuliani, had no scientific foundation.

The first tremors in the region were felt in mid-January and continued at regular intervals, creating alarm in the city.

Vans with loudspeakers drove around the town a month ago telling locals to evacuate their houses after Giuliani, from the National Institute of Astrophysics, predicted a large quake was on the way.

Giuliani, who based his forecast on concentrations of radon gas around seismically active areas, was reported to police for "spreading alarm" and was forced to remove his findings from the Internet.

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi appeared on the defensive at a news conference, saying now was the time to concentrate on relief efforts and "we can discuss afterwards about the predictability of earthquakes."

Italy's civil protection agency held a meeting of the major risks committee, grouping scientists charged with assessing such risks, in L'Aquila on March 31 to reassure the townspeople, concluding there was no reason to forecast a more powerful earthquake than the previous tremors. REUTERS

AMEDEO TROIANI / GETTY IMAGES

Rescuers walk past the rubble of buildings destroyed by an earthquake yesterday in Onna, Italy. The roughly 6.3-magnitude earthquake tore through central Italy, devastating historic mountain towns, killing at least 150 people.

Chinese police uncover human trafficking plot

BEIJING Chinese police have detained two people suspected of trying to traffic about 300 mainly young people into Costa Rica, state media said.

The Costa Rican Embassy in Beijing became suspicious after receiving visa applications from residents of southern Guangdong, who said they wished to be reunited with their parents who had moved to the Central American country, the official Xinhua news agency said. The identity cards and birth certificates were forged, prompting an investigation.

"Officers found the parents of the applicants were all living in China and their application documents were all fabricated," Xinhua added.

Police tracked down suspected ringleaders in Guangdong and found "a number of forged visa application documents and an account book recording the fees they had asked from the applicants," it said. REUTERS

Media covers U.S. war dead after 18-year ban

MILITARY The media was permitted Sunday to cover the arrival of a U.S. armed service member's coffin at the Pentagon's mortuary in Delaware for the first time in 18 years.

A flag-draped coffin bearing the remains of air force Staff Sgt. Phillip Myers arrived at Dover Air Force Base. Myers, 30, of Hopewell, Va., was killed in Afghanistan Saturday by an explosive device, the Pentagon said.

The administration of President Barack Obama relaxed a Pentagon ban on media coverage of returning U.S. war dead in February.

The ban was imposed in 1991 during the first Gulf War with some exceptions. Former president George W. Bush imposed a stricter ban during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, sparking criticism the government was hiding the human cost of its military operations. REUTERS

U.S. death toll

- The Pentagon says at least 4,262 U.S. service members have died in Iraq since the U.S.-led invasion in March 2003, while another 673 have been killed in Afghanistan.

Obama backs Palestinian state in Turkey

ANKARA U.S. President Barack Obama told Turkey's largely Muslim but secular democracy yesterday the U.S. was not at war with Islam and that it wanted to aid efforts towards creating a Palestinian state.

Obama

Obama reiterated the U.S. position after the new Israeli foreign minister said last week Israel was not bound by a U.S.-backed deal to start talks on establishing a Palestinian state. REUTERS

Burn victim receives facial transplant, grafts on hands

PARIS French surgeons have replaced parts of a burn victim's face and hands using donor tissue, in what their hospital said was the world's first combined operation of that kind.

The surgeons at the Henri Mondor Hospital began with the hand transplant and then replaced the 30-year-old man's face from the lips up, giving him a new scalp, nose, ears, forehead and eyelids and reconnecting the nerves, tendons, arteries and veins. REUTERS

Sixth in history

- The face transplant was the sixth in the world. Surgeons previously performed transplants on a man disfigured by a rifle shot and a woman mauled by her dog.

News in brief

JAKARTA Twenty-four people are feared dead after an Indonesian military plane on a training exercise crashed in wet conditions at a base in West Java yesterday. The Fokker 27 aircraft had 17 parachute trainees, one instructor and six crew on board. REUTERS

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Comment & Views

Comment

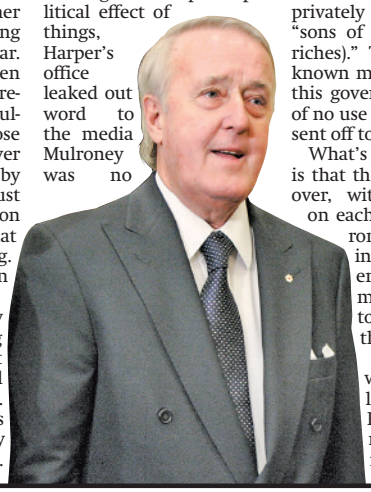
Don't mess with Mulroney

NationalReport
Lawrence Martin
metronews.ca/nationalreport

Crossing paths with a close associate of Brian Mulroney the other day, something quickly became clear. Prime Minister Stephen Harper had better be careful. The confidant said Mulroney was seething, close to the breaking point over the treatment of him by Harper's office. He just might unload, he said, on Harper in a way that would be devastating. "You know how Brian gets."

Brian Mulroney may not be popular among average Canadians, but among the Tory faithful he has a lot of admirers. Among historians he is becoming increasingly appreciated with time. He won two majority governments, something Stephen Harper will probably never do.

Because Mulroney is once again tangled up in the controversy over his taking money from arms dealer Karlheinz Schreiber, Harper has sought to distance the party from him. Worried as usual about nothing else except the political effect of things, Harper's office leaked out word to the media Mulroney was no longer even a card-carrying Conservative.



Even if that were true — and Mulroney denies he threw out his membership card — it's not something the Prime Minister's Office should be doing.

The Mulroney associate said he could understand the Harper team wanting to keep some distance in the formal sense. But even privately they were being "sons of … (rhymes with riches)." This is the well-known modus operandi of this government. If you're of no use politically, you're sent off to Alcatraz.

What's unusual this time is that the row has spilled over, with Conservatives on each side of the Mulroney question going after one another in a caucus meeting and going to the media to air their discontent.

This is a party which, thanks largely to Stephen Harper, has been remarkably unified and disciplined over the last three years. Now there are cracks — and for no good reason. The Mulroney controversy was aired out last year before a parliamentary committee. Canadians did not appear to let the matter affect their judgment of the Harper government.

But by overreacting, the prime minister's men have brought it into the spotlight. They have awoken long-simmering divisions between those on the old Reform side of the party who never liked Mulroney and those on the old Progressive Conservative side who remain his allies.

Brian Mulroney remains an influential man. That's why Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff telephoned him (how quaint) recently to wish him happy birthday on his 70th. Had Prime Minister Harper done a little schmoozing like that, there would be none of these problems.

Lawrence Martin is a Globe and Mail correspondent and author who writes about national affairs from Ottawa.

MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Gun control victim in Harper legislation

Wendy Cukier

After a high-profile shooting, politicians flock to cameras to express outrage and sympathy for the victims. But as elections loom they focus on the complex calculus around votes. Many Canadians are aware of the influence of the powerful National Rifle Association in the U.S., but are astonished to learn how the gun lobby drives the agenda in Canada. Speaking recently to the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Prime Minister Stephen Harper advocated dismantling essential parts of gun control in Canada and then introduced legislation to the Senate. The proposed law will eliminate the registration of rifles and shotguns, including the powerful semi-automatic rifle like the one used by Marc Lépine at L'Ecole Polytechnique in 1989.

The gun lobby cries, "Punish criminals, not law-abiding gun owners." But where do criminals get their guns? While smuggled handguns fuel crime, so do Canadian guns diverted through theft and illegal sales. And legal gun owners sometimes go off the rails. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police say any gun in the wrong hands is dangerous. All firearm owners need to be licensed and all firearms need to be registered.

"Controlling firearms is not a panacea, but it does reduce the risk of gun violence."

How exactly does filling in forms constitute "punishment." We need licences to drive. In most cities we need permits to own dogs and even cats. It's not called "punishment." It's called being responsible and accountable.

Certainly, too much money was spent licensing two million gun owners and registering seven million firearms — $100 million per year over 10 years according to the auditor general. But the money is gone. It can't be reinvested. The RCMP says ending the registration of long guns will save about $3 million per year.

Controlling firearms is not a panacea, but it does reduce the risk of gun violence. What sense does it make to dismantle a system that is working? Suicides, particularly among youth and murders of women with guns, have plummeted. Homicides with rifles and shotguns have declined precipitously — 32 people were murdered with long guns in 2007 compared to 107 in 1991.

Priscilla deVilliers, whose daughter Nina was abducted and murdered, reminds us: "Six separate inquests recommended licensing and registration of guns, including the inquest into my daughter's death."

Wendy Cukier is president of the Coalition for Gun Control.

Worth mentioning

That's the spot: Study shows how itching brings relief

Scratching an itchy spot turns off an itch "switch" in the spinal cord, U.S. researchers said yesterday in a finding they think could lead to better treatments for itching disorders.

Tests on monkeys showed scratching short-circuits itch signals to the brain.

Understanding how this works may lead to new treatments for people with diseases such as AIDS or Hodgkin's disease that cause itching not easily relieved by antihistamines or steroid creams.

"There are more than 50 diseases that produce itch that can't be easily treated," Glenn Giesler Jr. of the University of Minnesota, whose study appears in the journal Nature Neuroscience, said in a telephone interview.

In earlier studies, he and colleagues showed neurons in a special part of the spinal cord known as the spinothalamic tract become very active when itchy substances are put on the skin.

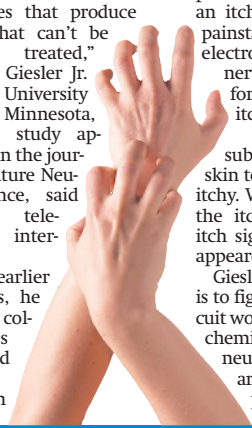
Giesler said itch sensations — which are a form of pain signal — are sent to a region of the brain known as the thalamus.

But it has not been clear how scratching interferes with the itch signal. "We wanted to known how scratch works. How does it relieve itch?" Giesler said.

His team studied monkeys to find out what happens to these nerves when an itch is scratched. They painstakingly attached tiny electrodes to individual nerve fibres responsible for transmitting the itch signal to the brain.

Then they injected a substance under the skin to make the monkeys itchy. When they scratched the itch, Giesler said the itch signal "magically" disappeared.

Giesler said the next step is to figure out how that circuit works, and what are the chemical messengers or neurotransmitters that are involved in this process. REUTERS



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Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Surging syrup prices a boon to producers

This season's $60 US a gallon price tag on maple syrup makes for one expensive pancake breakfast, but it's a windfall for thousands of small, mostly family-run businesses in the United States and Canada that produce the sweet, aromatic treat. REUTERS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

Building permits and purchasers index fall

FIGURES The value of Canadian building permits issued in February fell by a greater-than-expected 15.9 per cent, while purchasing activity in the economy resumed contraction in March, statistics released yesterday showed.

The fall in building permits, reported by Statistics Canada, was caused mainly by a large drop in commercial and institutional building projects, while residential permits stabilized with a 0.3 per cent drop.

The overall number was the worst fall since the 16 per cent registered in October.

In a separate release by the Purchasing Management Association of Canada and the Richard Ivey School of Business, the Ivey Purchasing Managers Index fell to 43.2 in March from 45.2 in February.

A reading of 50 indicates that economic activity remained flat from the preceding month, while a lower reading reflects a slowing.

"On balance, the weakness in this report is indicative of the overall economic malaise that appears to be quite pervasive in the Canadian economy," TD Securities economics strategist Millan Mulraine said.

"The weakness in this (purchasers index) report is indicative of the overall economic malaise."
Millan Mulraine, TD Securities

"Indeed, by the look of things, it does appear that the Canadian economy is poised for its worse quarterly performance on record, and this report only adds to this overall assessment on the state of the economy." REUTERS

Carbon-cap deal won't come easily, UN climate chief says

ENVIRONMENT It will be hard work getting rich nations to agree to cuts in greenhouse gases that are deep enough to satisfy the demands of developing countries at climate talks, UN's climate chief told Reuters yesterday.

Some 175 nations are meeting this week in Germany in one of a series of UN-led meetings meant to forge a deal in Denmark in December to replace or extend the Kyoto Protocol.

The talks are split on the level of action that industrialized countries should take to curb their greenhouse-gas emissions by 2020. More ambitious goals would unlock action from developing nations.

China and India said rich countries should cut greenhouse gases by at least 40 per cent by 2020. REUTERS

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Yahoo Music revamped

Net giant to collect referral fees from third-party providers

Yahoo Inc. is partnering with other online music providers as the Internet giant tries a fresh approach to getting an edge in the evolving digital music business.

The new version of Yahoo Music, unveiled yesterday, aggregates paid and free music services available on the Internet, allowing Yahoo users to access and interact with the services directly from the Yahoo site.

Yahoo has struck commercial relationships with digital music retailers like Apple Inc.'s AAPL.O iTunes and Amazon.com Inc., collecting a fee for every referral, the company said.

The move comes a little over a year after Yahoo announced it was shuttering its own paid-music service, and is in keeping with the company's latest efforts to make Yahoo a more open service by integrating products and services developed by other companies.

"We really want to focus on providing the service that's most valuable to users, and then partner with third parties to provide the entire set of music services," said Yahoo Music general manager Michael Spiegelman, who described the new Yahoo Music as a major strategic shift for the company.

Visitors to the Yahoo Music site will be able to select from a variety of modules representing the web's disparate music sites, including free, radio-like streaming audio services such as Pandora and last.fm, music videos from Google Inc.'s YouTube, and paid music downloads from iTunes and Amazon.com.

The new Artist Pages on Yahoo Music will also offer a one-stop shop for people interested in particular singers or bands, offering everything from tour dates and concert tickets to photos and editorial content. REUTERS

Visitors

- Yahoo Music was the No. 2 online music site in December with 19.6 million unique visitors, behind only Time Warner Inc.'s AOL Music, according to ComScore.

Toronto **Biovail under suspicion**

MARK BLINCH/REUTERS

Eugene Melnyk, former chairman and chief executive officer of Biovail Corp., arrives at the Ontario Securities Commission for a hearing in Toronto yesterday. Securities regulators have accused Biovail and its officers at the time of misrepresenting how a truck accident that destroyed a product shipment would affect its results in an effort to gloss over a weaker-than-expected third-quarter performance.

Toronto man charged with fraud by U.S.

PONZI U.S. securities regulators charged a Toronto-based fund manager, who describes himself as the "Chinese Warren Buffett," and his hedge fund with operating a multimillion-dollar investment fraud, the Securities and Exchange Commission said yesterday.

The SEC charged Weizhen Tang and the Oversea Chinese Fund Limited Partnership with operating a Ponzi scheme, where funds from new investors were used to pay purported profits to other investors.

Since as early as 2004, Tang has raised as much as $75 million US from more than 200 investors for his hedge fund, the SEC said.

Tang told investors in February 2009 that, in an effort to conceal substantial trading losses and attract new investors to his hedge fund, he posted false profits on investors' account statements and used funds from new investors to pay out at least $8 million in "fake" profits to others, the SEC said. REUTERS

Business in brief

TECH Shares of Sun Microsystems Inc. tumbled 22.5 per cent after it rejected a $7-billion US buyout bid from IBM, leaving the smaller server and software maker vulnerable to lawsuits from shareholders nervous about its viability.

AUTO Ford Motor Co. said yesterday it had slashed automotive debt by 38 per cent, or $9.9 billion US, bolstering its finances amid a deep auto industry downturn and sending its shares up more than 13 per cent. REUTERS

Your Money

EDITOR: NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

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Get paper, not plastic

Cash is a better gift than the underused gift card

SmartCookies

metronews.ca/smartcookies

Do you like giving gift cards? Try cash instead — it's easier and guaranteed to be spent or saved as you intended.

If you open your wallet, peek in your bedside table or rummage through your dresser drawer, we bet you'll likely find a gift card or two lying around.

The business of gift cards is a multi-billion dollar a year industry; with retailers making millions in revenue from unredeemed cards.

If you need to buy someone a present, and you're debating a gift card, we'll settle that debate right now: Don't.

While the gesture is nice and it might say that perhaps you've put a little more thought into your gift, it can actually end up being more costly in the end.

Unless you are certain that the gift card recipient will be making a big purchase and could use that money to put towards the item, or you know for sure that the card will go to great use, cash is always better. It's just as thoughtful (and easier for everyone) to put some money in a nice card and add a note mentioning that this is to put towards whatever they happen to love or are saving for. Let's be honest, who wouldn't much rather have cash?

Here's the main problem with a gift card. If you can't find anything you want in that particular store, the card goes to waste. Or often you end up with $4 remaining on your card and then have to spend even more cash just to use up that remaining money.

If you are going to go the gift card route, to avoid giving someone a card for a store they may not shop at, buy one from a mall. That way they will have more selection and more opportunity to use every last cent on the card.

If you are on the receiving end of a card for a store you would never dream of stepping foot into, you can always try to sell it online. There are sites, such as plasticjungle.com where you can sell or trade your gift cards.

A few more things to keep in mind: Make sure the gift card you purchase does not have an expiry date. If your card expires before you've had a chance to use it or exhaust its value, contact the issuer. They may extend the date, although they may charge a fee to do it.

If you do end up with some cards with just a few dollars on them, check with a friend who may also have a small balance and pool your resources. Or, as a last resort, if you receive a card for a store you don't shop at and don't plan to sell or trade, re-gift it to someone you know shops there.

Have a comment or tip for the Smart Cookies? Email us at smartcookies@metronews.ca.

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Tune in Monday nights at 10:30 p.m. EST/PST on the W Network and be sure to visit smartcookies.com for more tips.

Portion of tuition can be childcare

MoneyMatters

Henry Choo Chong

metronews.ca/moneymatters

Q My wife and I chose to send my son (who is seven years old) to private school. This year, we were told by the school that our child does not qualify to deduct the full tuition. Is this correct? — Frank

A Childcare expenses can be deducted for children up to 16 years of age. Generally, the parent with the lesser income must claim the deduction. A Parent may deduct as following — the lesser of:

- The actual amount paid
- Two-thirds of the parent income
- $7,000 for children under seven years old/$4,000 for children between seven and 16 years old.

Generally, private school tuition is not considered childcare, however an amount maybe apportioned to childcare. Your educational institution will determine what portion is childcare. Parents of children in religious or affiliated institutions may qualify to deduct the non-childcare portion as charitable donations. Check with your tax adviser.

Q Last year was my first year as a real estate agent. Can I deduct home cost from my commissions? — Ali

A Yes! Provided it is your principal place of business or used exclusively to earn income and to meet customers on a regular and continuous basis. Your claim is limited to the income earned in the year as an agent. See your accountant for other claims.

Henry Choo Chong, CGA, can be reached at choochonghcga@yahoo.ca.

Investing

Allan Small

Allan Small discusses strategies on how to profit on the current market. Visit metronews.ca/investing

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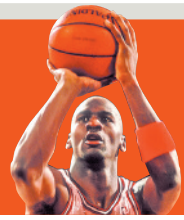
Raiders sign Garcia: Report

Veteran quarterback Jeff Garcia will join the Oakland Raiders, who signed the 39-year-old signal-caller to a one-year deal, according to the Contra Costa Times. Garcia spent his first five years in San Francisco after leaving the CFL. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports



Jordan headed to Hall of Fame

Former NBA superstars Michael Jordan, David Robinson and John Stockton headline the 2009 class for the Basketball Hall of Fame. Joining the three members of the NBA's 50th Anniversary Team in this year's class are coaches Jerry Sloan and C. Vivian Stringer. Enshrinement festivities in Springfield, Mass., are scheduled for Sept. 10 to 12. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Flames defeat Kings

Calgary one victory away from clinching division title

Jarome Iginla registered a goal and an assist, as the Calgary Flames took over sole possession of first place in the Northwest Division with a 4-1 win over Los Angeles at the Pengrowth Saddledome in Calgary last night .

Daymond Langkow, David Moss and Jim Vandermeer also scored for the Flames, who have won two of their last three games. Calgary holds a two-point edge over the Canucks and travels to Vancouver for a showdown tonight.

Michael Cammalleri recorded two helpers, while Miikka Kiprusoff made 23 saves to earn his 45th win of the season, the fourth-highest total in league history. New Jersey's Martin Brodeur owns the record for most victories in a season with 48.

Wayne Simmonds lit the lamp for the Kings, who have dropped seven of nine. Erik Ersberg was victimized for four goals on 38 shots in defeat.

Langkow opened the scoring 2:05 into the second period, poking in a loose puck during a goalmouth scramble. Simmonds, though, answered with a rocket following a faceoff win just past the midway point of the frame.

TODD KOROL/REUTERS

Calgary's Warren Peters and Los Angeles King Wayne Simmonds exchange blows during a fight in the first period last night in Calgary. The Flames won 4-1.

Calgary regained the lead when Iginla drifted to the left dot and hammered a cross-ice pass from Cammalleri that beat Ersberg on the stick side with 3:22 to go in the middle stanza.

Vandermeer turned on the red light at 3:46 of the third period, then Moss took a feed from Craig Conroy, cut to the middle and beat Ersberg on a forehand-backhand deke with 9:14 remaining.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Tonight

VS

7:00 p.m.
Sportsnet/TEAM 1040

It's a must-win for the Canucks if they have any hope of claiming the Northwest Division and earning the third seed in the Western Conference. The Flames hold a narrow two-point lead after defeating the Kings last night, but the Canucks have been slightly better in their previous head-to-head meetings this season. Vancouver has won three of the five games, although one of those wins came in overtime while another was decided by shootout.

DOUBLE TROUBLE: The Flames are a paltry 8-15-4 in back-to-back games this season. Calgary has been even more abysmal in the second half of consecutive games, winning just twice in thirteen previous opportunities.

DOUBLE TROUBLE: The last time the Canucks and Flames faced off, Roberto Luongo and Mikka Kiprusoff combined to stop 78 of 84 shots and five of six attempts in a 4-3 shootout win for Vancouver.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

NCAA Title for Tar Heels

MIKE SEGAR/REUTERS

Michigan State Spartan Kalin Lucas goes up for a basket against University of North Carolina Tar Heel Deon Thompson during the NCAA men's championship basketball game last night. North Carolina won 89-72 for its fifth title.

Griffey homers as Mariners win opener

BASEBALL Jose Lopez drove in three runs and Ken Griffey Jr. added a solo homer in his return to the Mariners, as Seattle roughed up the Minnesota Twins 6-1 in yesterday's season-opener for both clubs.

Griffey, who started in right field yesterday in place of all-star Ichiro Suzuki, who was placed on the 15-day disabled list with an ulcer, is back for his second stint in Seattle, a franchise he opened his Hall of Fame career with back in 1989.

Griffey was taken No. 1 overall in the 1987 draft by the Mariners and spent the first 11 years of his 20-year career in Seattle. He finished in the top 10 in the American League MVP voting seven times — winning the award in 1997 — during his years with the Mariners. Seattle fans were then left heartbroken after the star was granted his trade request following the 1999 season, as Seattle shipped him to Cincinnati.

The Reds did not record a playoff appearance in Griffey's injury-filled time with the team, and he was dealt to the Chicago White Sox before the trade deadline in 2008.

Griffey ranks fifth all-time in homers with 612.

Franklin Gutierrez had a two-run homer for the Mariners, who began the Don Wakamatsu era yesterday, as he was named manager back in November. He is the first Asian-American manager in MLB history and just completed his first season as bench coach for the Oakland Athletics last year after spending five seasons on the coaching staff of the Texas Rangers.

ERIC MILLER/REUTERS

Seattle Mariners third baseman Adrian Beltre trips over Minnesota Twin Nick Punto after an unsuccessful pick-off attempt yesterday. The Mariners won 6-1.

8 Ken Griffey Jr. now has eight opening day home runs in his career, which ties him with Hall of Famer Frank Robinson for the all-time record.

Felix Hernandez (1-0) got the win as he lasted eight innings and gave up just a run on five hits with six strikeouts and three walks.

Michael Cuddyer drove in the lone run for Minnesota. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Weir eager to take on shortened Augusta

GOLF Former winner Mike Weir has relished playing at Augusta National since his very first U.S. Masters, but he is especially looking forward to this week's edition on a layout shortened by 10 yards.

The left-hander from Sarnia, Ont., is no fan of some of some of the recent changes made at Augusta, which has controversially been stretched by almost 500 yards since Tiger Woods clinched his maiden victory there in 1997.

South African Trevor Immelman won last year's title with an eight-under total of 280, triumphing by three shots over Woods after shooting a final-round 75 in tricky, swirling winds.

Throughout that week, the birdie roars that have traditionally lit up Augusta National's back nine were strangely silent on a layout lengthened to 7,445 yards.

"The tournament had become a little bit like the U.S. Open, it had become such a grind," Weir told Reuters in an interview.

"To try to bring back the roar of excitement on the back nine is the right thing to do," he said. "It's tough enough for the players and it brings a lot more excitement for the fans as well."

REUTERS

On a quest to go green
Artist Franke James offers a solution on how we can meet the global warming challenge with imagination and creativity in her new lively illustrated book Bothered By My Green Conscience, $16.95. Visit mygreenconscience.com. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Health & Beauty

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Soaps push the envelope

The J Spot

Guiding Light, not just the longest running soap opera, but the longest running scripted broadcast series ever (it started on radio in 1930 and moved to television in 1952 where it has broadcast five days a week ever since) will no longer shine as of September.

Mine was a General Hospital household. I was 17 when Luke and Laura wed, apparently one of 30 million people who tuned into the highest rated hour in American soap opera history. Okay, given Laura fell in love with Luke after he drunkenly raped her made for a less-than-conventional romantic love story, but that's what soap operas have always done best — taken reality, and given it a hyper unrealistic spin.

That's why they were such a hit with clothes iron-wielding housewives, whose greatest daily drama was whether to serve meatloaf or tuna casserole for dinner.

But while soap operas have long been stereotypically dismissed as a frivolous indulgence that housebound women waste their time watching while ignoring their domestic duties, one could argue that soap operas have often been on the cutting edge of mainstream TV, at least when it comes to sexuality.

Soap operas were dealing with storylines that involved abortion, unwanted pregnancy, domestic violence and infidelity back in the late '60s and early '70s, long before primetime TV touched the stuff. As the World Turns introduced a gay character in 1989, All My Children introduced an AIDS-related storyline in 1988 and One Life to Live included AIDS and homophobia in its storylines. All My Children created a media stir with its first on screen lesbian kiss back in 2003 and introduced a transgendered character shortly thereafter.

"Soap operas have often been on the cutting edge of mainstream TV, at least when it comes to sexuality."

Sure, often the most controversial plotlines are brief and usually done to temporarily boost lagging ratings but, given the popularity of soap operas (at their height in the 1980s, two-thirds of all women living in homes with televisions "followed" one or more soap operas), there is no denying their influence.

Losing such a mainstream outlet for these issues is a bit tragic. I just hope we don't end up throwing the baby out with the soapy bathwater and that mainstream television continues to shine some light on sexuality issues that are important to all of us.

Josey Vogels is a sex and relationship columnist and author of five books on the subjects. For more info, visit joseyvogels.com.

In brief

DRINKS Want to help your kids keep the weight off? Just give them water instead of soda and other sugar-sweetened drinks, researchers advised Monday. One analysis of the diets of children and teens in the United States showed they drink, on average, 235 "empty" calories in sugar-sweetened beverages each day.

REUTERS

Less food for thought?

Calorie restriction improved memory performance: Study

CELIA MILNE
for Metro Canada

A German study has found that eating less may help improve memory in older people.

The findings suggest that simply eating fewer calories could help fend off dementia, a benefit that has been shown in animal studies in the past.

Researchers divided 50 healthy elderly people into three groups. They ranged in weight from normal to slightly overweight.

The study took place over three months. The first group received 30 per cent calorie restriction; the second group received a higher amount of "good fats" found in olive oil and fish (but the same total fat intake); and the third group proceeded with a regular diet.

Memory performance was measured before and after the three-month period, using standardized tests.

The people who were on calorie restriction had a boost in memory of about 20 per cent, while those in the other two groups had no change.

"They remembered more words on average from a word list, with an average of about a fifth more," Dr. Agnes Flöel, a neurologist at the University of Münster in Germany, told Metro in an email.

Eating fewer calories may help fend off dementia, reported a recent German study.

"Our study provides some first evidence on the impact of calorie restriction on memory in the elderly, but this study has to be followed up now by us and hopefully others," added Flöel, who led the study.

The next step is to try to repeat the findings in a larger group of healthy elderly people and to try to figure out why calorie restriction can aid memory. Then, the group plans to study the use of calorie restriction in those with mild cognitive decline.

Memory loss is quite common. A recent survey found that 58 per cent of Canadian baby boomers (ages 40 to 60) have had short-term memory loss over the past year.

Much more serious is Alzheimer disease, which affects a small number of young people, and one in 20 Canadians over age 65 (one in four over age 85). The Alzheimer Society of Canada predicts that in the next 25 years, Alzheimer disease will more than double in the Canadian population.

Flöel warned that people who already suffer from Alzheimer disease might not be good candidates for calorie restriction, since they tend to lose weight anyway, and become emaciated.

"To implement calorie restriction at this stage might actually be too late for any brain-beneficial effects, and might be detrimental to them as far as their general health status is concerned," she reported.

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Beyoncé's new group

Beyoncé is officially part of a new girl group. The singer is lending her famous voice to Nickelodeon's animated kids' show, Wow! Wow! Wubbzy!, playing Shine, the lead singer of the The Wubb Girls, in four episodes beginning April 27. PEOPLE.COM

Entertainment

Electra Dance

Carmen Electra will strut her stuff on Dancing With the Stars. She is scheduled to perform with her group, Cherry Boom Boom, live on the April 14 episode. USMAGAZINE.COM

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Self Explanatory is the new album from rapper Classified. He plays Boss Night Club in Vancouver on April 23.

SONAMY ISHI PHOTO

This rap is Classified

East Coast artist sticks to regular guy vibe on 13th album

ROB MCMAHON
For Metro Canada

Classified's a rapper you can take home to mom.

That is, unless he's at his own mom's for dinner. She lives around the block from him in tiny Enfield, N.S. — as does his dad and siblings, a handy situation when searching out session musicians.

"My parents just moved down the road five minutes away, and I'm still on same street as my sister and brother-in-law," said Classified (real name Luke Boyd). "(My dad) can play guitar and bass, and on the new album he sings a couple hooks. Both of my brothers are on the record. It's good when the whole family plays instruments — I can call them up and they'll work for cheap!"

In a genre gutted by bling, brittle beats and stories of crime and cocaine, Classified sticks to humour and a "regular guy" vibe. Now signed to a major label, he insists nothing's changed: He's still living near his parents, smoking ganja, riding his bike and making beats in his home studio. These details come out in Self Explanatory, which is sequenced like a Choose Your Own Adventure book. For example, during Up All Night, Classified points out the irony of being born with a speech impediment and ending up a rapper.

"I wanted to do a song and say look — other people see a famous rapper, but I'm just a normal dude, I live in a subdivision," he said. "My mom will tell me stories about when I was a kid ... and I just thought it was interesting. I had no idea I didn't speak until I was three."

"I wanted to do a song and say look — Other people see a famous rapper, but I'm just a normal dude." Classified

On his lucky No. 13 album, Classified both raps and produces. The self-taught beatmaker, like other Canadian rappers (touring partner Shad springs to mind), is a huge '90s hip-hop fan — West Coast for the melodies, East Coast for the grimy drums and soul samples. His beats recall teenage heroes: Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Nas and most notably, Gangstarr's DJ Premier.

"I think from 15 to 25 is definitely when you take in the music you like for the rest of life. It was the time when I would just indulge myself, when everything was about music and I always had headphones on," he said.

"(I love that) whole Primo (DJ Premier) cut-up hook — especially on the Moment of Truth album. How Primo used vocals and other MC's words as hooks ... I love cutting in an a capella verse and have it flipped into the hook."

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Rourke back in the ring at WrestleMania

Mickey Rourke loves wrestling, but he is putting Hollywood first.

The actor brought a slice of Hollywood to Texas on Sunday as he — and later Pussycat Dolls lead singer Nicole Scherzinger — talked to reporters at Reliant Stadium ahead of WWE's annual pay-per-view extravaganza WrestleMania 25. Rourke addressed talk several weeks ago that he may get involved at WrestleMania in a wrestling role.

"My agents said it would be detrimental to my career" to take the focus off of acting after making a comeback in The Wrestler, he told reporters. Rourke was in town to take a seat Sunday night at the anniversary edition of the mother of all wrestling pay-per-views in support of legends Ricky (The Dragon) Steamboat, Jimmy (Superfly) Snuka and (Rowdy) Roddy Piper. With (Nature Boy) Ric Flair in their corner, the legends took on Chris Jericho, who has bad-mouthed them and Rourke's character in The Wrestler on WWE TV shows in recent weeks.

Later on at WrestleMania 25, Rourke couldn't quite restrain himself after all. After Jericho won his match against the legends, he provoked the former boxer Rourke who ended up getting into the ring and taking his cowboy hat off before punching and knocking down the WWE superstar to gain a measure of revenge for the legends. REUTERS

Underwood wins country prize

MUSIC Carrie Underwood was named entertainer of the year Sunday at the 44th Academy of Country Music awards, securing her status as country's hottest star on a night that felt like a changing of the guards.

Underwood became only the seventh woman in 39 years to win country entertainer of the year, snapping Kenny Chesney's four-year winning streak while also receiving the trophy for top female vocalist.

"I've had a lot of good moments in the past four years. This one takes the cake," Underwood said in accepting her entertainer of the year award. REUTERS

The Game could go for one hour
With the CW expected to complete its exit from the half-hour comedy genre at the end of this season, the creator/executive producer of one of the network's two remaining comedies, The Game, is mulling turning it into an hourlong series. REUTERS

Two versions of love

ADAM NAYMAN
for Metro Toronto

Joaquin Phoenix and Gwyneth Paltrow star in Two Lovers, which opens in Vancouver this Friday.

James Gray's fourth feature is called Two Lovers, but it actually features three: The film centres on a bipolar young man named Leonard (Joaquin Phoenix) whose sudden, powerful attraction to a blonde party-girl neighbor (Gwyneth Paltrow) is complicated by his tentative affair with the meek daughter of family friends (Vinessa Shaw).

What makes Two Lovers so affecting is that it takes both relationships seriously: Gray's willingness to put sticky, conflicted feelings onscreen — and then to work through them with a measure of compassion for all involved — makes him a rarity in an American cinematic landscape dominated by postmodern irony and rom-com glibness.

"One thing that was a big deal for me was hearing Duke Ellington talk about music," says Gray over the phone from Los Angeles. "He said that there were two kinds of music: The good kind and the other kind. I think that what he was talking about went beyond genre.

"It was about emotional commitment and being authentic to that emotion. That's not the same thing as realism, but it is about a lack of distance."

Two Lovers owes much of its sense of intimacy to its star. Instead of overplaying his character's awkwardness, Phoenix digs deep to locate a wobbly sense of grace; Gray says that the scene where Leonard does a spontaneous nightclub pop-and-lock routine was the actor's idea.

Phoenix also does a brief rap in Two Lovers, and while Gray has already discussed his star's recent bizarre behavior, he doesn't mind saying, once again, that he doesn't get it.

"It's beyond my comprehension," he says. "I don't know what he thinks he's doing. People figure that I should know because we work together so frequently but when we're not shooting, I don't talk to him very often. He doesn't even have a phone. You have to text him to get him to phone you."

Phoenix's extracurricular activities hopefully won't overshadow his and Gray's achievements in Two Lovers, which works the same moody, shadowed groove as the director's previous New York stories The Yards and We Own the Night (which also starred Phoenix) but without any genre movie elements.

"(Those films) were amazingly autobiographical, but Two Lovers has almost nothing that has happened in my life," says Gray. "But I take it as a compliment when people say that this seems like my most autobiographical film. I guess people see it as being very deeply felt."

Movie **profile**

Columnist in hot water over Wolverine bootleg

News Corp. has given FoxNews.com's Roger Friedman a big thumbs-down after the longtime columnist published a positive review of an illegally downloaded copy of X-Men Origins: Wolverine, due to open May 1.

But the columnist's status appears uncertain even though reports surfaced over the weekend that he had been fired.

The trouble began last Tuesday when an illicit copy of the film made its debut onto the Web. Fox immediately condemned the theft and copying of an unfinished workprint of the film and enlisted the FBI and the Motion Pictures Assn. of America to track down the perpetrators.

Downloading a copy of the film himself, Friedman wrote a review that appeared in his Fox411 column Thursday.

"I doubt anyone else has seen this film. But everyone can relax. I am, in fact, amazed about how great Wolverine turned out. It exceeds expectations at every turn," he wrote.

But he also described how easy it is to download any film or TV show, and joked he might decide to catch up on some other recent films via illegal downloads.

Fox — pointing that Fox News is a separate business under the News Corp. banner — responded Friday, "This behavior is reprehensible and we condemn this act categorically, whether the review is good or bad."

Parent News Corp. issued its own condemnation, saying, "Roger Friedman's views in no way reflect the views of News Corp.," and adding,

After word began to circulate late Saturday that Friedman had been removed as well, News Corp. amended its statement, adding that Fox News had "promptly terminated Mr. Friedman."

But had it? Contacted Sunday, Friedman would not comment except to say, "Reports of my death have been extremely exaggerated." REUTERS

Entertainment in brief

MOVIES Tribeca is giving itself a shot to the heart. The New York festival will screen what is described as a work-in-progress documentary about Jon Bon Jovi. The previously unknown picture, titled When We Were Beautiful, follows the musician and his band on their 2008 Lost Highway world tour. The Phil Griffin-directed movie will screen as the festival's centerpiece presentation on April 29, with another pair of screenings scheduled over the following three days. REUTERS

Sex and The City sequel release date set
It's time to start planning your outfit for the premiere — it's been confirmed that a Sex and the City sequel will debut May 28, 2010. Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Cynthia Nixon and Kristin Davis have signed up to star in the film. INTOUCHWEEKLY.COM

Chris Brown pleads not guilty to assault

R&B star Chris Brown pleaded not guilty in a Los Angeles court yesterday to charges stemming from an alleged attack on his girlfriend, pop singer Rihanna.

Brown, 19, entered the pleas during his arraignment in Los Angeles Superior Court.

Rihanna's attorney, Donald Etra, told reporters after the hearing Rihanna hoped a plea bargain could be struck, but that she would testify against Brown if required. Brown and his attorney Mark Geragos did not speak to reporters.

Judge Patricia Schnegg set an April 29 status hearing for Brown.

GETTY IMAGES PHOTO

Singer Chris Brown being arraigned in a Los Angeles court yesterday.

Los Angeles prosecutors have said Brown attacked Rihanna, 21, during a roadside dispute in his rented Lamborghini last February. A photo of Rihanna's bruised and battered face was leaked onto the Internet.

Brown later issued a statement saying he was "sorry and saddened" about the incident, and was seeking counselling.

The formal charges accuse Brown of assaulting Rihanna "by means of force likely to produce great bodily injury" and threatening to commit a crime "which would result in death and great bodily injury." He could face up to four years in prison if convicted.

A police affidavit said Brown shoved Rihanna's head against the passenger window, repeatedly punched her in the face, bit her ear and finger, and put her into a headlock. At one stage, the affidavit said, Brown told Rihanna: "I'm going to kill you."

Brown broke onto the Billboard charts in 2005 at the age of 16 with his single Run It! and sold two million copies of his self-titled debut album.

Barbados-born Rihanna also released her debut album in 2005 and had a No. 1 hit single with S.O.S. less than a year later. She followed with three more No. 1's — Umbrella, Take a Bow and Disturbia.

REUTERS

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DVD picks

Doubt
Director: John Patrick Shanley

MAGNIFICENTLY ADAPTING his award-winning stage play of Catholic school guilt to the screen, writer/director John Patrick Shanley has retained its most unsettling questions: Who can we trust? Is morality absolute?

He invites us to judge, but then lays out reasons why our verdict might be wrong, even tragically so. He wants us to think, something that runs counter to blind devotion.

One of the two antagonists in the film is committing evil in the guise of good, or attempting to.

Father Flynn (Philip Seymour Hoffman), the priest at St. Nicholas Church School in the Bronx, is a beloved cleric and mentor. He may be sexually molesting one of his students, a troubled black child named Donald Miller (Joseph Foster).

Sister Aloysius (Meryl Streep), the school's officious principal, suspects Flynn is a pedophile, but she has no proof, only innuendo.

She may well be wrong, and she may also be motivated entirely by jealousy and spite.

Every element of Doubt is in perfect balance. Shanley's dialogue is economical but sharp, his direction completely assured, the production impeccably mounted.

Extras include an audio commentary by Shanley and several featurettes.

Yes Man
Director: Peyton Reed

A RECENT CAREER slump prompts Jim Carrey to put the clown shoes back on, via a movie that will remind you of his Liar, Liar smash of a decade past, only with fewer laughs.

On the upside, Carrey is every bit as eager as Carl Allen, his convert to positive thinking in Yes Man. On the downside, he strains at times for jokes that once came so effortlessly.

Carl is the loans officer for a small Los Angeles bank, who thinks his job is to say "no" to everybody who asks for money.

Then Carl meets a self-help guru, played well by Terence Stamp, who tells him that his life will change dramatically if he starts saying "yes" to everything.

Carl embarks on escapades that include learning Korean, taxiing homeless people and giving out reckless loans.

Extras include several featurettes, a gag reel and music videos by gag band Munchausen by Proxy.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

On the web
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Leighton yes, Locklear no
Heather Locklear may have passed on the chance to be a part of the CW's Melrose Place reboot, but Laura Leighton (right) — who played sassy schemer Sydney Andrews on the original Fox prime-time sudser — has said yes. TVGUIDE.COM

Green CD boxes out of sync

During the past few years, many record labels devoted considerable resources to creating CD packaging that has less of an impact on the environment. Suddenly, it's no longer as high a priority.

"We're thinking about another kind of green right now," says Duncan Browne, COO of the 27-unit, Brighton, Mass.-based Newbury Comics chain. "We're seriously committed to green of the dead president kind."

That's because U.S. album sales continue to fall. As of the end of first-quarter 2009, album sales are down seven per cent from the corresponding year-earlier period, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

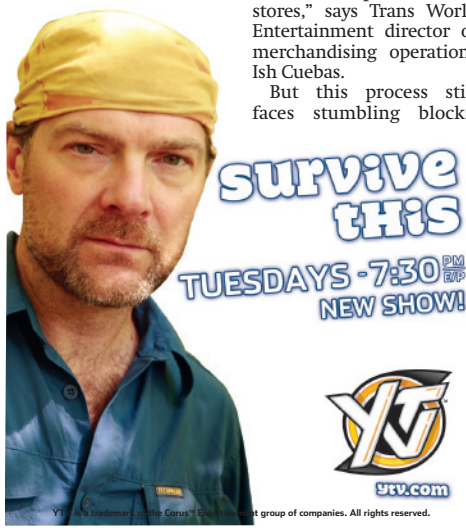
"Green packaging is way down on my list right now," says the head of one U.S. independent distributor, adding that there are "bigger problems to worry about."

Three of the four major labels say their progress toward green packaging — and away from polystyrene-based jewel boxes — stands at much the same point as it did last year at this time. Only Sony, which had lagged behind the other three majors, says it's offering significantly more sustainable packaging. Its measures include using 100 percent recycled paperboard for its Legacy Records Playlist series.

"Green packaging is way down on my list right now."
Head of a U.S. independent CD distributor

All four majors are now using eco-friendly packaging for some catalogue albums, but they still release most new albums in jewel boxes.

The majors are, however, making moves toward standardization. The National Association of Recording Merchandisers (NARM) and the Recording Industry Association of America's joint Sustainable Packaging Working Group concluded that a six-panel recycled paperboard package produces the least greenhouse gas emission. The study also recommends minimizing the weight of packaging and using 30 per cent recycled paper.



Minimizing packaging weight would reduce fuel costs in shipping and could also help solve the problem of shrinking store space for music in the long term. "If CD packaging shrinks by 50 per cent, I can get 50 per cent more product into stores," says Trans World Entertainment director of merchandising operations Ish Cuebas.

But this process still faces stumbling blocks. Sources suggest that Anderson Merchandisers — the Wal-Mart rackjobber, or distributor, that changed the course of the packaging debate when it jumped aboard the green bandwagon — says it wants any new packaging to have the same size, weight and shape as current packaging. That's because modifying its automated sorting equipment would cost millions of dollars, other retail sources say. (The Amarillo, Texas-based company didn't return calls for comment.)

Universal Music Group, which has moved to ecopaks with paperform trays for much of its catalog, confirms that the lighter packaging often "comes shooting out of the machines because they are not stout enough," according to Universal Music Group Distribution president/CEO Jim Urie.

"Even the inclusion of an o-card wrap-around (for) the jewel box makes such packaging unsortable," Cuebas says. But if the industry creates a new packaging standard, he says Trans World will spend money to retool its equipment.

That seems unlikely in the short term because of the potential cost of the change. REUTERS

Kasdan to direct magic movie

FILM Jake Kasdan will make magic for New Line, signing on to direct Burt Dickenson: The Most Powerful Magician on Planet Earth.

The story centres on a Burt Dickenson, one half of successful two-man team who accidentally kills is partner and loses his inner magic. The projects aims to showcase the old school/David Copperfield vs. new school/Criss Angel rivalry in a tone that harkens back to such movies as Austin Powers or Zoolander.

Figure skater Firth lands remake role

FILM Figure skater Taylor Firth will play the starring role in Donald Wrye's remake of 1978's Ice Castles, which has begun filming in Nova Scotia. The love story set in the world of competitive figure skating also stars Rob Mayes, Henry Czerny and figure skater Molly Oberstar. Olympic medalist Nancy Kwan will appear in a cameo in the film. Wrye, who directed the original film, is also handling the remake. REUTERS

Easter Bunny battle begins

FILM Easter is becoming the new battleground for studios as two competing projects featuring the Easter Bunny go head to head. Sony Animation is preemptively picking up Hip Hop, in which the Easter Bunny decides to retire and hides out as a pet with a suburban family, turning their lives upside down. The deal happened at the same time that Illumination Entertainment purchased I Hop to act as its first live-action picture. REUTERS

In brief

FILM Christina Ricci is Born to Be a Star. The actress has signed on for the porn-tinged comedy that Adam Sandler co-wrote. Ricci the plays the lead character's innocent girlfriend. REUTERS

Kenya's Style
Kenya Hunt
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For complete online movie listings, trailers, reviews and tickets, visit: metronews.ca/movies

4/7/09

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime	251	308	3 CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Rick Mercer	22 Minutes	Ron James-Road Between		CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	255	358	6 JOY	E! News (N)	The Insider	The Biggest Loser (N) (CC)				Dr. 90210 "Behind the Mask"		News (N)
	254	-	8 M	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		Metropia
	250	321	9 CTV	etalk (CC)	Hollywood	American Idol (CC)		(:01) Fringe "Inner Child" (N)		Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	-	-	10 OMNI	The Daily	Frasier (CC)	Islam 101 (CC)		Poltergeist: The Legacy		Scrubs (CC)	The Search	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	NCIS "Toxic" (N) (CC)		Holmes in New Orleans (CC)		Project Runway Canada		News (N)
	256	389	12 VI	Instant Star	TMZ (N) (CC)	Reaper "Underbelly" (N)		Dancing With the Stars (CC)		(:01) Without a Trace (N)		News (N)
	253	359	13 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	Rita Rocks	Friends (CC)	Curb-Enthsm	Curb-Enthsm	The List
	-	-	14 CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	Reaper "Underbelly" (N)		90210 "Off the Rails" (N)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	NCIS "Toxic" (N) (CC)		The Mentalist (N) (CC)		(:01) Without a Trace (N)		News (N)
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	The Biggest Loser (N) (CC)				Law & Order: SVU		News (N)
	602	568	19 W	Will & Grace	Friends (CC)	Remedy Me	Keep Real	Style by Jury	Style by Jury	Miss Naked Beauty		Maxed Out
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	It's the Easter Beagle		Dancing With the Stars (CC)		(:02) Cupid "Live and Let Spy"		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	Poltergeist II: The Other Side ★★ (1986) JoBeth Williams.				King	Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Steves Europe	About-Money	Nova "Doctors' Diaries" (N)		Frontline "Black Money" (N)		Independent Lens (N) (CC)		About Us
	290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	American Idol (CC)		(:01) Fringe "Inner Child" (N)		News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
	-	364	29 PBS	Frontline "Black Money" (N)		My Hero	Summer Wine	Tavis Smiley	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)		Nova "Doctors' Diaries"	
	296	654	34 SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	Paid Program	Family Court	Bring Wall St
	298	653	35 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Reaper "Underbelly" (N)		90210 "Off the Rails" (N)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	36 WGN	MLB Baseball: Cubs at Astros		WGN News	Reaper "Underbelly" (N)		90210 "Off the Rails" (N)		Friends (CC)	My Wife-Kids
	297	652	37 WPX	PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	According-Jim	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
	199	311	68 STR	News (N)	News		Late Show-Letterman		Make It Right: New Orleans		Late Late Show	
news	502	390	53 NW	Saving Luna (2007) (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		Saving Luna (2007) (CC)		National
	500	500	48 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	NHL Hockey Calgary Flames at Vancouver Canucks. (Subject to Blackout)					Sportsnet	Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	SportsCentre	That's Hockey	SportsCentre	In This Corner	UEFA Champions League Soccer: Quarterfinal				SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Departures "Jordan" (CC)		Mantracker Dan and Jared.		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Departures
	410	403	24 SCR	(6:30) WWE Monday Night Raw (CC)			Women's College Basketball: NCAA Tourn. Final				Final Score	Final Score
	417	406	65 SC	Hot Import	Hot Import	Pimp My Ride	Pass Time	Low Life	Low Life	Super Bikes!	Super Bikes!	Hot Import
	416	409	144 GLF	Fútbol Español		Gol TV News	Hallo Bundesliga		Gol TV News	Paid Program	Gol TV News	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	Adrenaline	Survive This	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	Family Biz	Prank Patrol	Falcon Beach (CC)		Mystery Hnt.
	555	545	50 TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN (CC)	6TEEN (CC)	Futurama (N)	American Dad	Chicken	American Dad	Moral Orel
	557	541	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	Han. Montana	Zack & Cody	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	553	546	55 TRE	Comfy Couch	Zigby (N)	Max & Ruby	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Gardens	Recreat. Eden	New York: A Documentary Film (N) (CC) (DVS)				Examined Life (2008, Documentary) Premiere.		
	575	583	60 CMT	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Top 20 Steamiest Video		Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Reba (CC)	Reba (CC)	Hope & Faith
	570	580	42 MM	Degrassi: TNG	Instant Star	The Shift		T.l.'s Road to Redemption		Video on Trial	Video on Trial	Video on Trial
	600	564	43 H&G	House	House	Holmes on Homes (CC)		SarahCottage	Design Inc.	HGTV's Top	Dirty Business	House
	615	520	61 A&E	Manhunters	Manhunters	Manhunters	Manhunters	The First 48 (CC)		The First 48 (CC)		Manhunters
	628	584	62 SPKE	Deadliest Warrior		The Ultimate Fighter		CSI: NY "Sleight Out of Hand"		Deadliest Warrior		Disorderly
	521	560	64 TLC	Toddlers & Tiaras (N) (CC)		17 Kids-Count	17 Kids-Count	18 Kids-Count	18 Kids-Count	Toddlers & Tiaras (CC)		16 Children
	616	522	69 SHO	The Outer Limits (CC)		Mutant X (CC)		Testees (CC)	Trailer Park	Saving Grace (N) (CC)		House (CC)
	620	523	70 BVO	Neil Young: Heart of Gold		Law & Order "Floater" (CC)		Without a Trace (CC)		Neil Young: Heart of Gold ★★★ (2006) (CC)		
	601	562	71 SLC	Rich Bride, Poor Bride (CC)		ET Canada	Til Debt-Part	Real Housewives OC		Trading Spouses		Paradise Hotel
	520	505	72 DIS	Combat School (N) (CC)		Daily Planet (CC)		Destroyed	Time Warp	Combat School (CC)		How It's Made
	522	506	74 HIS	NCIS "In the Dark" (CC)		Sandhogs "It Is What It Is"		Crime Stories (CC)		NCIS "In the Dark" (CC)		Sea Hunters
	627	528	75 SPC	Super Heroes		Stargate SG-1 "2001" (CC)		Star Trek: Next Gener.		Star Trek: Voyager (CC)		Star Trek: Ent.
	294	650	97 TBS	The Office	My Boys (N)	The Office	(:31) Seinfeld	Sex and-City	Sex and-City	(:01) Friends	(:31) I Am Sam ★★ (2001)	
	619	525	98 TROP	Vanity	Tube Tales	Tube Tales	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
	603	561	99 FN	Good Eats	Good Eats	Iron Chef America (CC)		Unwrapped	Unwrapped	The F Word		Good Eats
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	Lewis Black	Flt.-Conchords	Daily Show
	320	621	90 CEN	I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry ★ (2007) (CC)				The Kingdom ★★ (2007) Jamie Foxx, Chris Cooper. (CC)				Hannibal Ris
	581	566	101 MTV	From G's to Gents (N)		MTV Live	After	Taking the Stage (CC)		From G's to Gents		MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	Startling Proofs		National Catholic Mission		Acts	Acts	Startling Proofs		Paid Program
	-	-	103 MUL	Eight Heroes	Mom's-Upset	Il Caffe		In Germany	Euromaxx	Schauplatz	Euro. Journal	Patrol World

critics' corner

The Biggest Loser
The eight remaining contestants are faced with a temptation challenge in which they find 100 covered trays containing high-calorie snacks, cash prizes and a golden ticket that gives the finder the only vote in this week's elimination. They can uncover as many trays as they like, provided they eat any snacks they uncover. Chef Rocco DiSpirito also returns with more healthy cooking tips. Bob Harper and Jillian Michaels are the trainers. 8 PM on JOY NBC

Holmes in New Orleans
When Mike Holmes found out that Brad Pitt had started the Make It Right Foundation to help rebuild New Orleans, he wanted in. See, "Make It Right" is the slogan of Holmes' company as well as his philosophy of building. This new two-part special follows Holmes and his team to New Orleans to build an energy-efficient, hurricane-proof home that knocks Pitt's socks off. HGTV Canada has a six-part miniseries about the project starting Thursday. 9 PM on GTV

Miley's a Negative Nelly

Miley Cyrus tells Teen Vogue she's just not that into Robert Pattinson and she doesn't think her fans are either. The Disney star is getting more negative in her old age, also making some not-so-nice comments about Las Vegas. EONLINE.COM

Celebrity Buzz

Paris declares intent to wed

RELATIONSHIP Paris Hilton says she's so in love with boyfriend Doug Reinhardt that the couple is ready to tie the knot after just a few months of dating. "He's going to be my husband," Hilton tells E! News. "We're best friends. It's not like we just met. We've known each other over the past year."

METRO WORLD NEWS

'Get me my Mercy': Madonna

PEOPLE Madonna returned to Britain "devastated and shaking" after her bid to adopt a second child from Malawi was denied, sources tell the Daily Mail.

The singer is appealing the court's decision, and faces further trouble as a man claiming to be Mercy James' biological father has stepped forward.

Madonna has reportedly told her lawyer, "Do whatever you can to get me my Mercy."

METRO WORLD NEWS

Faris folks on defence

PEOPLE Anna Faris' parents are her biggest fans and spend their spare time writing information about the actress online, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

Faris' mother and father wrote her biography on movie site IMDb.com and also frequently fire off emails to journalists and critics who write unfavourable articles about the actress.

She tells the New York Daily News, "It's mortifying. I love them so much. They're very proud and supportive, but they do stuff like that all the time. My dad has written to various publications defending me."

And Faris reveals there are downsides to having such techno-savvy parents: "Dad Googles me all the time, which sometimes gets me into trouble. If I've had a drink too many and someone catches it, he'll know."

Faris co-stars as Seth Rogen's cosmetic counter girlfriend in the new comedy Observe and Report.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Jennifer's wedding paw-ty

PEOPLE Jennifer Hudson's pet dogs will have starring roles at her wedding, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The singer-and-actress will wed her partner, David Otunga, soon — although she will not reveal an exact date — and wants her three Pomeranian dogs — Dreamgirl, Oscar, and Grammy — to play a big part.

She said: "I want my dogs to be in my wedding. I am so serious." Hudson also hinted her dress could be "the most untraditional thing" about the day, adding: "Everybody comes down the aisle in a white gown. Maybe I'll give it a twist."

The Oscar-winning actress has lots of experience of marriage ceremonies because of her previous job as a wedding singer.

She added: "Anything I could sing at, I did. I've sung at a lot of weddings and seen a lot of the same things, and I want to make sure this is different — but traditional, and very, very classy.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Shooting mars second wedding

PEOPLE Gisele Bündchen married Tom Brady for a second time this weekend but the ceremony was marred by an alleged shooting at a photographer's car, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The supermodel and her husband held a second wedding ceremony in Costa Rica on Saturday.

Photographer Yuri Cortez was taking pictures of the wedding from afar using a long lens camera. He has filed a complaint with Costa Rican authorities claiming that the couple's bodyguards accosted him and demanded he give them his camera's memory card.

He says he refused and drove away — then the security began to shoot the car and the bullets went smashed his windows.

He said: "I put my foot on the accelerator and I heard the gunshot that shattered the rear window and broke the windshield. It very nearly hit me."

GETTY IMAGES

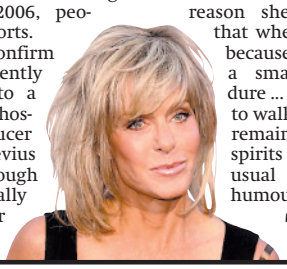
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Farrah's cancer fight

PEOPLE Farrah Fawcett's physician and a producer who works with her have released statements about her condition, following the news that the actress, 62, has been hospitalized in Los Angeles. Her current treatment is the latest setback in her long battle with cancer, first diagnosed in 2006, people.com reports.

"I can confirm that she recently checked into a Los Angeles hospital," producer Craig Nevius says. "Although it is usually against her nature to correct false or exaggerated stories ... Farrah is allowing this statement out of appreciation for her fans, who have offered their constant support throughout her fight ..."

Though Fawcett was photographed in a wheelchair, her physician, Lawrence Piro, said: "The reason she was in that wheelchair is because she had a small procedure ... She's able to walk. And she remains in good spirits with her usual sense of humour."



METRO NEWS SERVICES

Aniston back on the market again?

PEOPLE Jennifer Aniston was spotted "checking out" a handsome stranger on the weekend, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actress, who parted ways with John Mayer last month, showed she was over the musician when a mystery hunk caught her attention at Paul McCartney's charity concert in New York.

A source said: "Jennifer checked out a cute guy walking in. She looked him up and down twice. She flashed him a beaming smile but got pulled back into a conversation with her girlfriends."

The source added: "The girls talked for a bit about how elated Jennifer was to have free time again. Jennifer laughed out loud at that, as though it were an inside joke.

"She was having so much fun. John and their issues seemed like the last thing on her mind."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Thursday Variable 12° / 6°
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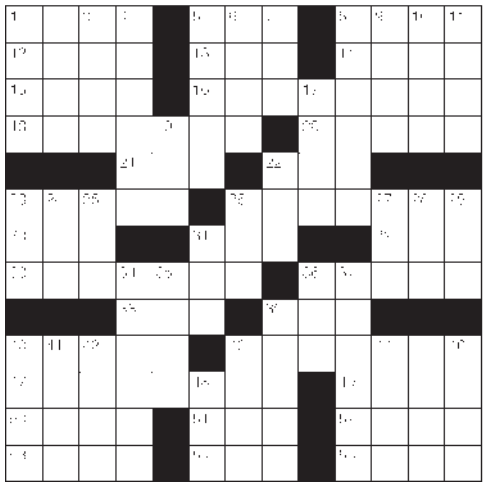
Take Five



Crossword across

1 Branch
5 Scoundrel
8 Break suddenly
12 Hebrew month
13 Bullring cry
14 Ringlet
15 Apportion (out)
16 CB kin
18 Nassau's island group
20 Mountain nymph
21 "The Da Vinci Code" author
Brown
22 Sky safety org.
23 Unkempt
26 German city
30 Noah's craft
31 Monkey suit
32 Back talk
33 "The Firm" author
36 Ballroom dance
38 Whammy
39 Has the ability
40 "Monopoly" building
43 Soccer star
wed to a Spice Girl
47 Moorish kings' palace
49 Emanation
50 Venetian blind piece
51 "Of course"
52 Harness part
53 "Thirty days — ..."
54 Ram's mate
55 Wood-shaping tool

Crossword down

1 Child of 54-Across
2 Concept
3 Geometry or algebra
4 Rye and pumpernickel
5 "Yankee Doodle Dandy" man
6 "Sad to say ..."
7 Obama, for ex.
8 Sacred beetle
9 Undraped
10 Met melody
11 Trudge
17 Wander
19 Spring time
22 Office transmission
23 Periodical, briefly
24 Mess up
25 Schuss
26 Drone
27 Einstein's birthplace
28 Cage component
29 Univ. transcript stat
31 April 15 payment
34 Scabbard
35 Captain's place
36 Pouch
37 Turkey's capital
39 Stop
40 Corned beef recipe
41 — podrida
42 Just one of those things?
43 Concoct, in a way
44 Coloured
45 N. Mex. neighbour
46 Lion's pride?
48 "See ya"

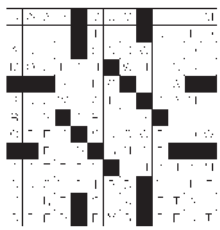
Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	3	6				1		
			8	1				2
1					5			9
		1	6		7		5	
	5			9			3	
	4		2		8	9		
5			9					7
4				7	2			
		9				8	6	

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:



1	6	2	5	7	9	4	3	8
4	7	5	3	1	8	9	6	2
8	9	3	4	2	6	7	1	5
6	4	1	7	9	2	8	5	3
2	8	9	6	3	5	1	4	7
3	5	7	1	8	4	6	2	9
5	3	8	9	4	1	2	7	6
9	1	6	2	5	7	3	8	4
7	2	4	8	6	3	5	9	1

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min.....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Warm Flageolet and Charred Vegetable Salad

INGREDIENTS:

1 red pepper
1 yellow pepper
1 medium onion
2 medium zucchinis
2 tbsp (25 ml) olive oil
1 can (15oz / 425g) flageolet beans
1 can (15oz / 425g) lentils
2 large sprigs of basil
2 medium tomatoes
2 tbsp (25 ml) crushed sun-dried tomatoes in oil
1 tbsp (15 ml) balsamic vinegar
Salt and black pepper
12 large black olives as garnish

METHOD:

1. Rinse, deseed and roughly chop peppers. Peel and slice onion. Trim, rinse, dry and thinly slice zucchinis.
2. Heat oil in large frying pan and brown peppers, onion and zucchinis over high heat, stirring occasionally.
3. Meanwhile, drain and rinse canned beans and lentils. Rinse, dry and tear basil leaves, and rinse, dry and roughly chop fresh tomatoes.
4. Add beans and lentils to pan, stir gently, then add basil, fresh tomatoes, sun-dried tomatoes and vinegar.
5. Season mixture, then let heat through, stirring well. Stone olives if necessary.
6. Turn salad into warm dish, garnish with olives and serve immediately.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES ♈
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Buy yourself a sweet smelling treat. Collect your allies and take action. Say nice things about a silly girl.

TAURUS ♉
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Get in touch with a realistic person. Find a new place to scavenge stuff. A dinner companion has trouble in transit.

GEMINI ♊
MAY 22-JUNE 21
A friend calls around after a weird event. Count your blessings when an assessor makes a mistake. Put the finishing touch on a pep talk.

CANCER ♋
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Don't despair about what happened in the past. A shameless troll will inspire you. Admiration will interest a drama queen.

LEO ♌
JULY 23-AUG 23
A strong desire opens up possibilities. The prospect of cash assistance is revealed. Great pleasure is found when a bad situation ends.

VIRGO ♍
AUG 24-SEPT 22
A dynamic person can't be moved to be with you. You're accused of not listening. Unwind with a companion and discuss your days of glory.

LIBRA ♎
SEPT 23-OCT 23
People are overlooking a good chance. An intolerant person fails unconditionally. Someone's teasing creates conflicts.

SCORPIO ♏
OCT 24-NOV 22
Avoid recklessness and devise a budget. Try to keep both feet on the ground. Interactions will focus on domestic life.

SAGITTARIUS ♐
NOV 23-DEC 21
Tacky gossip makes conversation difficult. A lonely person wants some attention. A man's egotism will increase rapidly.

CAPRICORN ♑
DEC 22-JAN 20
An equity problem flares up. An antique is found in a friend's home. Someone's compliment leads to tantrums.

AQUARIUS ♒
JAN 21-FEB 18
Your humour is admired by a romantic person. Say something about a dream. Concentrate on creating prosperity for all.

PISCES ♓
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Encourage a buddy to start a fitness program. Flee from a captivating person. Inform others when a decision is made.

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This day in history

APRIL 7, 1795: France adopts the metre as the basic measure of length.
APRIL 7, 1868: Thomas D'Arcy McGee, one of the Canadian Fathers of Confederation is assassinated by the Irish, in one of the few Canadian political assassinations, and the only one of a federal politician.
APRIL 7, 1906: Mount Vesuvius erupts and devastates Naples.
APRIL 7, 1940: Booker T. Washington becomes the first African American to be depicted on a United States postage stamp.
APRIL 7, 1948: The World Health Organization is established by the United Nations.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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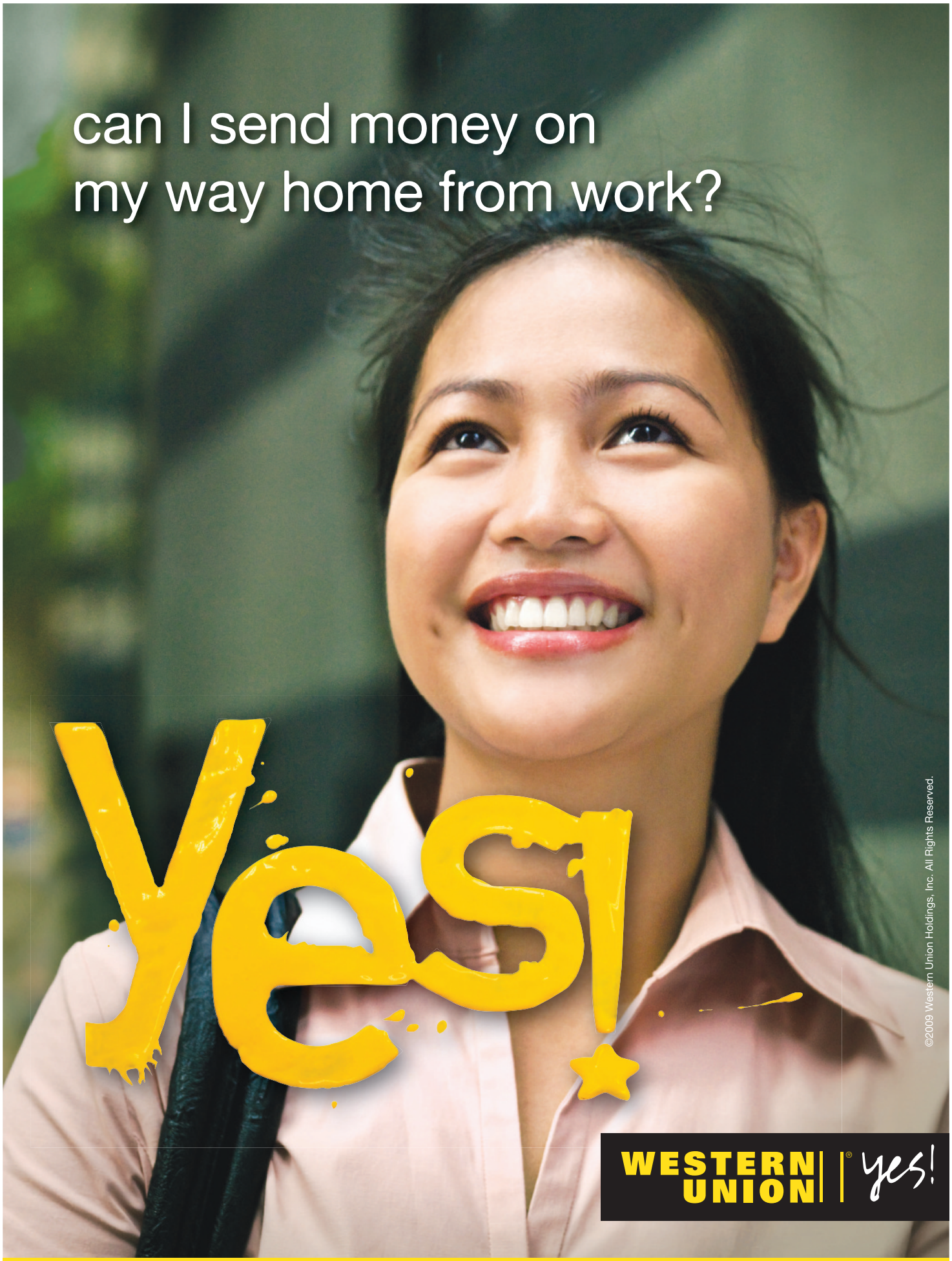

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